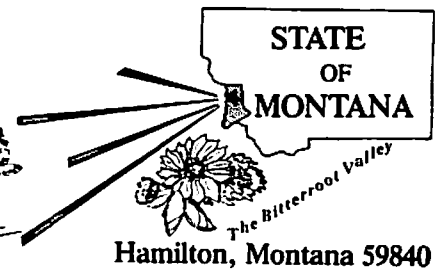
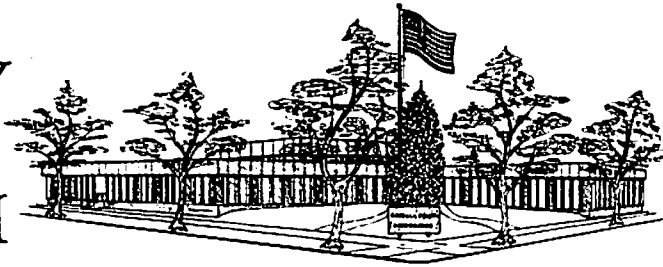


COUNTY OF RAVALLI



**Ravalli County Board of Health
215 South 4th Street – Suite D
Hamilton, MT 59840
(406) 375-6565
FAX (406) 375-6566**

***AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL BITTERROOT VALLEY
REALTORS, BUILDERS, CONTRACTORS, LENDING INSTITUTIONS
AND INDIVIDUALS PLANNING A BUILDING PROJECT IN RAVALLI COUNTY***

From: The Ravalli County Board of Health

Regarding: Need to obtain septic/drainfield permit BEFORE starting any construction or remodeling

In March 2006 a revision of the County septic/drainfield regulations tightened the requirements for drainfield permitting prior to any type of new construction or remodeling. It has become clear that not everyone understands these new requirements, so this letter is being sent to inform everyone who is involved with building or real estate in Ravalli County. Please help us pass the word.

In the current regulations, as in previous versions, it is mandatory that every landowner obtain an Installation Permit for a septic tank and drainfield BEFORE starting any new construction. For a new house this means BEFORE any footings or stem walls are placed. (See Section 3.1 of the Regulations).

PLEASE NOTE that a County permit is required REGARDLESS of whether the property is part of a State approved subdivision or not.

The revised regulations emphasize that an Installation Permit is also required for any alteration or enlargement of a previously approved system. (See Sections 5.1 and 5.2 of the Regulations). This means that a permit is also required whenever a house or other structure is remodeled to add plumbing facilities or an additional bedroom; every time a trailer or modular home is moved to a property; anytime a business with one or more employees is started on a property; or whenever a connection is made to a previously installed septic tank and drainfield after being unused for 5 or more years. (See Section 1.6 for further definition of "alteration").


Often, people purchase a property with an existing house or structure with an expectation to modify or expand it in some way. It is VERY IMPORTANT that they first determine whether they can get a permit for their planned renovations, even when the property has an existing drainfield system. (See Section 5.1.B of the Regulations).

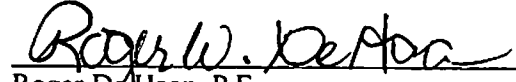
Because these regulations are very important for preserving the health and cleanliness of our community and water supplies, the County has established significant penalties for starting construction or remodeling without a permit: **Penalties may be as much as \$1,000 per day against the property owner and \$500 per day against any contractor or builder doing the non-permitted work.**

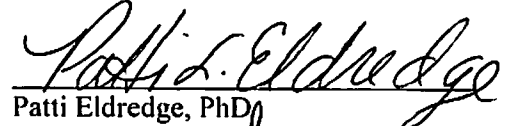
Please help us inform people of these requirements, because we would really prefer not to assess any penalties. If there are any questions you may call anyone on the County Health Board, or Ms. Lea Jordan, Director of the Ravalli County Environmental Health Department at 375-6565. We would also be happy to come speak at any group meeting. Thanks for your help.

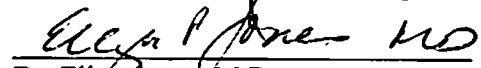
The Ravalli County Board of Health:


Carlotta Grandstaff, County Commissioner


Dr. John Swanson, M.D.


Roger DeHaan, P.E.


Patti Eldredge, PhD


Dr. Ellyn Jones, M.D.